

comfort in remembering the impact he had on each of us as well as on our community, State, and country.

I hope his wife, Janelle; son, Mike; daughter, Patty; beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren can take comfort in the same.

Mr. Speaker, Lewis was a man of great integrity and set an example for all those around him to hold ourselves to such a level of excellence and service. He was a great man, and he will be sorely missed.

TRUMP MUSLIM BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise out of deep concern for our country, our people, and those who serve us in uniform.

The executive order signed by President Trump on Friday has not only sown chaos and created a backlash being felt across the world, it is also endangering our people here at home and our troops overseas.

It bans refugees and is, for all intents and purposes, a ban on Muslims entering our country. It is a religious test. It plays right into the hands of ISIS, al Qaeda, and other extremist groups that mean to do us harm. It arms them. Their message in recruiting and propaganda has been that America is at war with Islam and that when we say we are tolerant and inclusive, it is a lie.

We must not let it be a lie.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, this order will do nothing to make America safer from terrorism. Our enemies will use this Muslim ban to their full advantage, broadcast to all of those who, for whatever reason, may be teetering on the edge of extremism, one image, one tweet, one excuse away from radicalization. And our Muslim allies are scratching their heads in disbelief and disappointment.

CBS News reported this morning, Mr. Speaker, that a senior Iraqi general who commands the elite counterterrorism force trained by the United States military was supposed to come here next week but is now banned from doing so. He told CBS news: "I am a four-star general. I have been fighting terrorism for 13 years and winning. Now my kids are asking me if I am a terrorist." That general, Talib al-Kenani, has been coming here for over a decade meeting with senior U.S. military leaders at CENTCOM, but now he is banned from entering the country.

This policy is dangerous, counterproductive, and extremely unfortunate.

It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that of the seven countries included in this ban—hear me, my colleagues—of the seven countries included in this ban, no refugee or immigrant from any of those nations has committed a terrorist act in the United States.

The President of the United States has a responsibility—a sacred and public trust—to do everything in his power

to protect our Nation. We have that same responsibility. This Congress has a sacred duty to hold the President accountable and ourselves for doing so in a way that respects our Constitution and our values. That, Mr. Speaker, is patriotism.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides: Stand against this order. Stand up for America. Stand up for the Constitution. Stand up for our values. Stand against an act that does nothing but empower our enemies and erode faith in our highest principles in our country and around the world.

The Nation, Mr. Speaker, is watching.

The world, Mr. Speaker, is watching. I urge us to action.

Representatives LOFGREN and CONYERS have introduced a bill to block this executive order. I have cosponsored it, along with 160 other Members of this House. This is a time when party should not be put before country. Party should not be put before patriotism. Party should not be put before principle.

Join me, and let us deny our enemies this potent tool and remind the world what truly makes America great.

IMPORTANCE OF FIREFIGHTERS IN RURAL AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the unsung heroes in many rural communities throughout America: our volunteer firefighters.

These dedicated volunteers answer the call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They spend time away from their families and homes. The training that is required can be costly and very time consuming.

Our volunteer firefighters make these sacrifices because they care deeply about their friends and neighbors. They care about their communities.

But rural America is facing a real problem with dwindling numbers of those who are willing to volunteer. A National Fire Protection Association report published last year shows the number of volunteer firefighters per 1,000 people has been decreasing since 1986.

Gone are the days when those seeking to volunteer had to add their names to a waiting list to join their local fire department. Sometimes volunteers could wait for years to be added to the roster, but that is not how it is anymore as fewer individuals are interested in signing up.

This is not unique to Pennsylvania, but it is happening in communities across the country. Small communities reap the benefits of having volunteer forces. According to a 2016 National Fire Prevention Association study, the time donated by volunteer firefighters saves localities across the country an estimated \$139.8 billion a year.

The savings are clear, and the service could not be more important. That is why last year I hosted two fire summits in my district to speak directly with local firefighters and try to identify not only the challenges that they face, but also some solutions to those problems.

Funding is always a problem that plagues volunteer departments and can truly decline quickly when we think of what it costs to purchase new equipment and be compliant with the latest regulations. Small communities are often already stressed economically and do not have a tax base that can assume another increase; but equipment replacement is paramount, and it can sometimes mean the life or death of a firefighter.

Volunteer fire departments also face training challenges. Firefighters in rural communities regularly need to travel long distances for instructional courses, and paying for the necessary training can be difficult. Training sessions might not focus enough on firefighting in rural communities, which is different from that in urban communities in a number of ways.

Personnel challenges remain a constant issue with declining populations, aging firefighters who are not being replaced with those of a younger generation, and a lack of tangible retention incentives.

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Yet, with all of these challenges, fire departments are faced with higher call volumes than ever before, according to a study from the National Volunteer Fire Council. Most fire departments across the country have experienced a steady increase in calls over the past two decades. This is a major source of the increased time demands on volunteer firefighters.

The number of calls, coupled with the decline in the number of volunteer firefighters, means that fire departments are continuously spread too thin. Most of the increase is attributed to a sharp rise in the number of emergency medical calls, false alarms, and the use of mutual aid as the number of firefighters has decreased.

Mr. Speaker, the dangerous work that these men and women do in order to protect the homes and livelihoods of Americans is not something that should be taken for granted. These first responders put their lives on the line and make great sacrifices in order to protect their neighbors and communities from harm. As a volunteer firefighter and EMT rescue technician myself and as a member of the Congressional Fire Caucus, I am grateful for the services that our first responders—brothers and sisters who serve the communities—provide and the constant state of readiness that they operate under.

While we must not forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice through their service, we must also ensure that their colleagues and all of